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Comments on unusual species.—Least Bittern: First winter record for Alabama (Dorn and Gaillard). White Ibis: First definite winter record for Alabama, although we have early December and late February records (Feldhaus, later Dorn). Broad-winged Hawk: We now have at least 7 winter records for the state, including a specimen from Autauga County and a bird netted and banded in Baldwin County in February, 1960. The Birmingham bird (Westons) is the northernmost, and on the Dauphin count, one was seen on the island (Chapman) and one at Bayou La Batre (Imhof). Rough-legged Hawk: A light-phased bird seen well (McTyeire and Rosen) showed all field marks and hovered among Dauphin sand dunes. This is the 6th winter record for Alabama, the second this winter, and the second on the coast. No specimen of this hawk for Alabama is known. Osprey: Seen well (Chapman), 5th winter record for Alabama (one Tennessee Valley, one Orange Beach, one Gulf Shores, and now two for Dauphin Island, all close to nesting sites). Least Sandpiper: Auburn (Dusi) is the 7th inland locality where this species has been recorded in winter in Alabama. Black Tern: First winter record for Alabama and one of a very few for the country (all in the Gulf of Mexico area) is by Dorn and Gaillard, watched closely as small flock moved slowly by in close range. White-winged Dove: Many winter records for the coast but this is the first time it has been recorded on a Christmas Count (Chapman). Long-eared Owl: The only other record south of the Black Belt is a specimen from Little Dauphin Island, November 1, 1958. This bird was flushed several times from dense pines on Dauphin by McTyeire and Rosen and seen well. The species is probably common in winter in the state but is easily overlooked because it remains in dense pines during the day. Red-breasted Nuthatch: The species continues its record of annual occurrence near Birmingham (since 1943) and on the coast (since 1955). Wood Thrush: Seen well at close range by Clustie McTyeire and at least 5 others on Dauphin. This is the first winter record for Alabama. (A Gray-cheeked Thrush seen well in Birmingham the day after the local count is the 4th winter record for this thrush for Alabama, one of them a specimen picked up in Jackson (by W. U. Harris). Bluegray Gnatcatcher: The species winters in the coastal plain up to Marion, Tuscaloosa, and Montgomery, and this Auburn record is the closest to being north of the Fall Line, and there are no other records north of it and outside of the coastal plain. Orchard Oriole: A male, seen well (McTyeire, Persons, and Coxe) is the second winter record for Alabama, both of them for Birmingham. Lincoln's Sparrow: Two birds squeaked up near Coden (Imhof) provided the third wintering locality for the state (others Marion and Livingston).

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REGIONAL WINGBEATS

DECATUR—It was raining when the last column was written and has stopped since only long enough for intermittent freeze-ups. Wheeler reservoir has been ice-locked at regular intervals through late December, January, and early February, but snow and sleet have remained on the ground for no more than a few hours.

Perhaps the biggest news, birdwise, was the shooting of a White-winged Scoter on December 10 in the big backwaters north of Decatur. The bird was killed by James Call, a local duck hunter. David Hulse saw it, persuaded Call to donate it and brought it by the Wheeler Refuge office for corroborating identification. Later, it was sent to the Alabama Conservation Department, mounted by Bob Skinner, and now is a permanent exhibit in the Department's collection. Wheeler Refuge Records show three previous Scoter sightings, one of these a bird shot by a duck hunter and examined by Paul Bryan, but the December 10 specimen was the first, inland or coastal, ever preserved in this State.

As a probable result of the bitter weather in the North, Old Squaws and Goldeneyes have been more common than usual. Old Squaws were present from December 19 through February 5, a full week later than ever noted before. David reports seeing 27 in a single day and several were bagged by local gunners.

An American Bittern that must have been equipped with long-handled underfeathers was seen continuously around a small pond on Wheeler Refuge in the Sunnyside landing locality from December 29 through January 14. It vanished only after the pond was covered by three-inch-thick ice. Despite the cold winter, several Common Egrets remained on the refuge throughout the late fall and winter and until this writing.

The Refuge continued to show an all-time record goose population, with a top count of over 43,000 Canadas, plus the usual complement of Blues and Snows. This was an almost 50 percent increase in Canada Geese, a 90 percent increase in Blue Geese, compared with the 1959-60 season, but with little change in Snow Goose numbers. Ducks lagged along with a low count until the third week of December, when numbers suddenly jumped to 75,000, stabilized for a brief period, then began dropping rapidly in mid-January.

Again refuge employees have been befuddled by off-brand geese that do not tally with any description of any wild goose species found on Earth. They have come to the inescapable conclusion that these have either been released from visiting space ships from the outer planets or are farmyard birds that have heard the call of the wild, doubtless the latter.

The apparent Bald Eagle scarcity has been felt here. Throughout late fall and winter, there were no more than two or three eagles using along the long stretch of river between Decatur and Triana, and during some past winters there have been a dozen or more.

—THOMAS Z. ATKESON, Wheeler Wildlife Refuge, Decatur

HUNTSVILLE (BROWNSBORO)—Our birding has been confined to our five acres and the highway into town this winter. Birds were slow to accept the suet and seed we put out, but clean up everything in sight now, and wait for us to put out more food. Species coming to feed in greater numbers are Juncos and White-throats. Other species are Cardinals, Chickadees, Titmice, Carolina Wrens, Fox Sparrows, Towhees, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Downy Woodpeckers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Goldfinches, and one Myrtle Warbler, which is "king on the mountain." It chases away all birds its size and holds its own against larger ones.

Regional Wingbeats (Continued)

We have seen no Bluebirds or Purple Finches around the house, though they were rather plentiful in this area last winter. The Myrtle Warbler mentioned is the only one we've seen. We've had one Golden-crowned Kinglet and one Brown Creeper, but have had no Ruby-crowned Kinglets or Nuthatches. Hermit Thrushes were seen in numbers in December and early January, but have not been seen since. The Red-tailed Hawk which wintered in our valley was seen in our trapping area on two occasions, once right at a trap. There were no birds in the trap and no indication of the hawk's having killed a bird or rodent. This same hawk was observed another day eating a mouse in mid-air. As it hovered or rode air currents, it would, with its break, tear pieces from the mouse it held in its talons. I watched from my car for about ten minutes, and though the hawk was within 200 feet of one of its favorite perches, it did not land, and was still in the air when I left.

We had one bird killed and two others wounded by a Shrike while they were hanging in our nets. This Shrike also made passes at the Juncos eating on the ground under one of the feeders. Neighborhood dogs have also been a menace.

JAMES C. and MARGARET ROBINSON, R.F.D., Brownsboro, Ala.

BIRMINGHAM — The December temperature was 41.5°, with a low of 13°. Although January brought no record lows in temperature, the average was 39°. Freezing rain ice-coated the trees and shrubs January 26 and 27 and added a hazard to the wildlife. The rainfall for February was 17.67 in., which exceeded the 1903 February record by 1.81 in. The five-day period, February 17-22, brought 14.37 in. of rain. Flooding proceeded in low-lying areas of Birmingham, with Shades Creek again making one-time Edgewood Lake a reality.

East Lake, last visited January 15, was a wintering ground for Coot, Canvas-backs and Ring-necks in about equal numbers, 40 to 50; two Ruddy Ducks and eight Pied-billed Grebe. Lake Purdy maintained a raft of 500 Coot and on several visits in December and January there were Ring-necks and Scaup to be seen.

The day after the Christmas count, December 27, Larry Rosen observed a Grey-cheeked Thrush on Tyler Road. On January 6 in a small marsh near Wylam, Tom Imhof heard a King Rail, which is the first winter record north of the Coastal Plain. A Common Yellow-throat was seen at Lake Purdy on February 4 by Mrs. Gayle Riley. (Christmas count reported one at Purdy.) Three male Woodcock were reported singing and displaying at Roberts Field on February 17 by Tom Imhof. Purple Finches have not been seen at feeders in as great an abundance as in the winter of 1959-60. Fox Sparrows have been noted in smaller numbers this winter. Two White-crowned Sparrows, probable migrants, were reported by Mrs. C. M. Ayres, Jr., at her feeder on February 24 and 25. Waxwings and Robins have been seen in large numbers throughout the Birmingham area. The abundance of fruit on hackberry trees may partially account for this increase.

Tom Imhof noted that local Robins have been in their territory all winter and singing since November. Before the February 17 rains, Tom Imhof reported a roost of 4,000 Robins, with an equal number of Starlings, near the Birmingham Slag Company in Wylam. This area covers several acres of trees with a low under-story of honeysuckle. A large number of Red-wing and Rusty Blackbirds, Grackles, and smaller land birds were included in the area. A Cooper's Hawk was observed visiting this area nightly. After the February deluge of rain the roost was reduced from 4,000 to 300 Robins; the bulk of the local winter Robins had departed.

HARRIETT H. WRIGHT, 2749 Millbrook Road, Birmingham, Ala.

TUSCALOOSA—The winter of 1961 brought increased bird activity in the Tuscaloosa area. Birds seem to be more active in preparation for the cold weather, and as a consequence, lists were large at the end of each day's birding. The most significant reflection was noted in the Black Belt, where Blackbirds were recorded in phenomenal numbers. Among the lists compiled during December and January on the Black Belt are found the Western Meadow Lark, Horned Lark and Brewer's Blackbird. The most severe cold weather which came towards the last of December and January brought countless Robins to the campus of the University of Alabama, and among these were noticed the two distinct races which we occasionally get here. An increase in the number of Pipits and Snipe were recorded on the plantations and in the Black Belt area. One lone Snow Goose was observed on a wooded pond east of Akron along the Warrior River. Canvas-back and Redhead Ducks were also seen on the larger wooded lakes. The most common bird of the thick swamp areas during December and January is the White-throated Sparrow, where apparently they winter by the thousands. Bluebirds appeared on each day's list in increasing numbers, which might indicate that they are coming back in their usual numbers in this particular section. Hunters had fair luck this year with the ducks, but only an occasional Canada Goose was turned up.

Spring-like weather in Tuscaloosa characterizes the middle of February and makes one want to bird the river bottoms which many of our warblers use as migration routes northward. Maybe this spring we will find the nest of the Bachman's Warbler.

DAN HOLLIMAN, University, Ala.

MONTGOMERY—Although Central Alabama experienced an unusually cold winter, some of the more northerly birds were absent in the Montgomery area. Longspurs, which have been seen in this area during the past few years, were not reported this winter, although Horned Larks and Pipits were very common. Myrtle Warblers were abundant and a few Purple Finches were present.

Of special interest was an albino Red-tailed Hawk collected in Autauga County and two black hawks observed on the prison property north of Montgomery. The black hawks were probably melanistic redtails. Approximately 30 Short-eared Owls also were seen during December on this property.

JAMES KEELER, Dept. of Conservation, Montgomery

GULF COAST—Our severe winter, with heavy snow throughout the eastern United States, brought an unusually heavy bird population to this area. Local food supply sustained them nicely until early February, but now there is not a cedar, holly, cherry laurel, or china berry in sight. As a result, many of our Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Tree Swallows have disappeared, probably moving over into Florida or westward into Louisiana. We can only hope our neighboring states will come to the rescue and cover for our short-sightedness in not planting more seed-producing shrubs.

This certainly emphasizes the need for our ornithological group to start a crash program to increase bird food throughout our state. May I again urge each of you to sell this idea to your Garden Clubs? Passing from the somber to the brighter side, our local marshes and the delta area is teeming with birdlife. The reason is simple—abundant food.

There are more than average numbers of Clapper and Virginia Rails. Also abundant are gallinules, ducks, Sora, and herons of all types. A count on Cochran Bridge causeway would produce over fifty (50) species any day this winter and will doubtless continue to do so until late March. Redheads and Ruddy Ducks were extremely rare, although Canvas-backs are, contrary to expectation, about as numerous as ever.

On the UNUSUAL side, we might list Whip-poor-wills, a Least Bittern and a nice flock of Black Tern. The first two above species are not unexpected, but Black Terns in December, January or February are extremely unusual.

This past week has been warm and the hint of Spring started our early nesters singing. Cardinals, Carolina Wrens, Doves, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers have begun their courtship antics. A few ducks are feeding in pairs; a pair of Barred Owls are nesting in my yard; and male Red-tailed Hawks are screaming defiantly at other males. Even turkey gobblers are sounding off to herald another Spring. "Ain't Nature grand?"

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THE BANDERS' CORNER

1960 BANDING REPORT — J. BOLLING SULLIVAN, III

During the year 1960, I was able to band 1,392 birds of 72 species. Of these, 434 were banded at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; and the remainder at Birmingham, Alabama. With the exception of five nestlings which were captured by hand, all of the birds were either trapped or mist netted. At the time of their capture they were banded, measured, weighed, and checked for fat deposition. In some cases plumage notes were taken.

The birds captured in greatest numbers were: Purple Finch, 239; White-throated Sparrow, 211; Slate-colored Junco, 175; Wood Thrush, 87; Field Sparrow, 55.

There was a noticeable decline in the number of Bluebirds and Cardinals banded, which is probably attributable to the weather of the 1959-1960 winter. On the other hand, this cold period produced an influx of Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. In early September thirteen *Empidonax* Flycatchers were netted and once again all four Eastern species were represented. Three Screech Owls were banded, all being caught in the nets at dusk.

During the year 603 birds were recaptured which I had previously banded. Of these 133 were classified as returns (not having been caught within the past ninety days). These are listed below by species and by the number of years since their initial banding: Mourning Dove 1—1 yr.; Downy Woodpecker 2—1 yr., 1—2 yr.; Blue Jay 1—1 yr., 1—2 yr.; Carolina Chickadee 6—1 yr., 1—2 yr.; Tufted Titmouse 7—1 yr., 1—2 yr., 2—3 yr.; White-breasted Nuthatch 2—1 yr., 1—2 yr.; Brown-headed Nuthatch 1—6 yr.; Carolina Wren 1—1 yr., 2—2 yr., 3—4 yr.; Mockingbird 1—3 yr.; Wood Thrush 2—1 yr.; Hermit Thrush 1—1 yr.; White-eyed Vireo 3—1 yr.; Black-and-white Warbler 1—2 yr.; Kentucky Warbler 2—1 yr.; Yellow-breasted Chat 2—2 yr.; Hooded Warbler 3—1 yr., 2—2 yr.; Grackle 3—1 yr.; Cowbird 2—1 yr.; Cardinal 15—1 yr., 6—2 yr.; Purple Finch 8—2 yr., 1—4 yr., 1—5 yr.; Rufous-sided Towhee 5—1 yr., 1—2 yr., 1—5 yr.; Slate-colored Junco 1—2 yr.; Chipping Sparrow 3—1 yr., 2—2 yr., 1—3 yr.; Field Sparrow 7—1 yr., 4—2 yr., 1—3 yr.; White-throated Sparrow 11—1 yr., 4—2 yr., 2—3 yr., 1—4 yr., 2—5 yr.; Song Sparrow 1—1 yr.

Four recoveries (banded birds recaptured at a distance of five miles or more, or found dead) were recorded during the year. They are:

562-13087 American Robin. This bird was banded on April 24, 1959, at Ithaca,

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N. Y., and found injured at Clarkton, North Carolina, about January 25, 1960.

57-136181 Cardinal. This bird was banded on November 8, 1958, at Ithaca, N. Y., and found dead there on May 9, 1960.

623-32886 Grackle. This bird was banded on May 1, 1959, at Ithaca, N. Y., and found dead there on May 31, 1960.

562-13012 Brown Thrasher. This bird was banded at Birmingham, Alabama, on June 20, 1958, and found dead in Birmingham on May 17, 1960.

J. BOLLING SULLIVAN, III, 3416 Sherwood Road, Birmingham, Alabama

BANDING REPORT—BROWNSBORO—JIM and MARGARET ROBINSON

We finished 1960 with a total of 740 birds of 72 species banded. By January 24, 1961, we had banded 145 birds of 16 species. Our best day this year was January 1, when we netted 38 new birds and had only 13 repeats. Bad weather and illness cut down on our banding, and on the few days since that we have put up the nets, we have had more repeats than new birds. On January 21, we had 18 new birds and 37 repeats.

Species banded in greatest numbers this winter are: Slate-colored Juncos, 115; White-throated Sparrows, 64; Field Sparrows, 47; Fox Sparrows, 30; Goldfinches, 29; and Song Sparrows, 23.

Returns (10-4-60 through 1-21-61):

Tufted Titmouse, banded 8-6-60; returned 12-24-60.

White-throated Sparrow, banded, 3-30-59; returned 12-24-60.

White-throated Sparrow, banded 4-7-59; returned 12-24-60.

White-throated Sparrow, banded 3-28-59; returned 12-31-60.

White-throated Sparrow, banded 3-29-59; returned 12-31-60.

Field Sparrow, banded 8-6-60; returned 12-24-60.

Field Sparrow, banded 8-7-60; returned 12-24-60.

Carolina Wren, banded 3-23-60; returned 12-27-60.

Carolina Chickadee, banded 8-26-60; returned 12-31-60.

Cardinal, banded 8-29-60, as adult male; returned 1-8-61.

Cardinal, banded 10-7-60, as immature; returned 1-20-61, as sub-adult female.

Field Sparrow, banded 8-6-60; returned 1-20-61.

White-throated Sparrow, banded 4-3-59; returned 1-21-61.

Cardinal, banded 8-6-60 as immature male; returned 1-21-61, in adult male plumage.

Cardinal, banded 8-6-60 as adult male; returned 1-21-61.

Please note the 5 returns on White-throats banded in the early spring of 1959.

We banded only 19 White-throats here at that time, and have been surprised that so many have returned. There was also a recovery of another of the 19 last spring (1960). It was found dead in a neighbor's yard.